

**Don't parrot BN, Selangor MB told
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Selangor Menteri Besar Khalid Ibrahim has been told to stop using Barisan Nasional's rhetoric in dealing with criticisms against the additional levy he mooted for migrant workers. MCPX

khalid ibrahim interview 250308 03 On Saturday, Khalid was reportedly to have asked leading rights group Suara Rakyat Malaysia (Suaram) - which opposed the move - to take a "more national approach" on the issues and not to attack the state government.

In response to this today, Suaram executive director Yap Swee Seng in a strongly-worded statement told Khalid not to follow BN's example.

"We would like to remind him that the protection of human rights is the foremost obligation of every government and 'national interests' cannot be used as an excuse to shirk off responsibilities to protect fundamental human rights based on universal principles.

"This rhetoric of the MB is most discouraging and regresses to language commonly known to be associated with the BN government," Yap stated in the statement.

The activist also ticked off Khalid for not taking the views of the civil society into consideration.

"We are concerned that the MB, who came into power because the previous government had not sufficiently listened to the people, has shown scant regard for the views and opinions of civil society," said Yap.

'Not addressing root causes'

In an exclusive interview with Malaysiakini last week, Khalid disclosed that his government would seek to implement a system where companies that hire foreign workers in Selangor be 'taxed' RM9 per worker per month.

He explained that the additional funds can be used to conduct skills training programmes for the state's youth and contribute towards decreasing the country's dependency on foreign labour.

Khalid argued the decrease in the number of foreign workers will also help reduce crime and social problems.

His views and the proposal has not gone down well with the civil society as well as the Bar Council, which has described the move as a "disturbing" and "xenophobic" response to the issue.

suaram fidh report on undocumented migrants and refugees 210308 yap swee seng Yap reminded Khalid, who is also PKR secretary-general, to stick to his party's election manifesto which among others pledged to uphold integrity, unity and human rights, and to uphold international treaties related to political and civic rights.

"Although we welcome the good intentions of the MB to reduce the reliance on migrant workers and to train unemployed youths in Selangor, we are of the opinion that the levy cannot and will not solve the problems as it is not addressing the root causes," said the Suaram leader.

To reduce reliance on migrant workers, Yap called on Khalid to implement the minimum wage of RM1,500 as promised by PKR in its election manifesto.

He also wants rights protection to be extended to migrant workers to reduce their risks of being exposed to abuses and exploitation, as well as to strictly enforce laws to curb unfairness and injustices against the migrant workers.

Yap urged Khalid to halt his levy policy and call for a dialogue with civil society groups to discuss a holistic solution on migrant workers as well as the formation of a consultative council on migrant workers.

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